

DOUBLE ISSUE 76+ PAGES OF SMART HOMEOWNER TIPS

This Old House

JULY | AUGUST 2007

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an appliance
'til you read
our advice

annual **kitchen & bath special**

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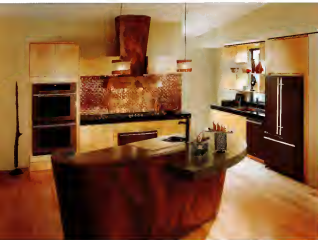
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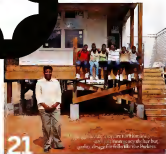
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letter FROM THIS OLD HOUSE

Staying Out of Hot Water

MISTAKES I HAVE MADE. In the third grade, calling my beloved music teacher Tigg Flood. (Not only did she not work at a 10th floor, but some would say I got karmic payback as per my carpool, in the photo at right.)

In high school, asking What's-His-Name to the prom. (Paid for the tuxedo, the limo, the limo, only to have her quote me like an all-night dancer with What's-His-Name, a woman that at age 17 can nearly kill a guy.)

In college, buying a used old MG convertible, even though the headlights would turn on and off every time I'd drive left or right. (I thought that was quirky, tick-a-happy cops thought I was signaling other drivers about speed traps.)

And finally, as my first real job, with too many scripts in front of me at a quarter to midnight on April 14, thinking "Aaaa! What are the chances of my getting an email?" (Fellow taxpayers, the answer to that is better than you might imagine.)

You may think that getting into a tub with a woman who is not my wife is a big mistake, too. But Rose Goodman actually saved my marriage. Rose sells hardware. Rose's own company called AP Supply in New York City, and like the best such people she helped me avoid many mistakes during our very on-again, off-again relationship. For example, she steered me away from the beautiful copper tub that \$35,000 would cost me at the time, and instead got me a tub that was roughly \$150. Another example: One of the more than one hundred sales they stocked, she knew the one model that was compatible with my wife's close-friendship—no on-again, off-again, and under, well-secured number with clerk fees and no door-collecting discussion.

While you might not have a Rose for guidance, you do have an Nismo—obviously—by the way, Nismo is a brand of regular folks whose real-world wisdom you'll find in a story called "Shoulds, Wonks, Confide..." on page 124. It's a cautionary piece, whereas they confirm mistakes made during these times and our experts offer up solutions. It's good stuff that if taken to heart will save you money and aggression. Along with all the other kitchen and bath ideas in this special issue, I hope you find it useful.

Sam Charters
SCOTT CRAWFORD
EDITOR



You may think getting into a tub
with a woman who is not my wife
is a mistake. But Rose Goodman
actually saved my marriage.



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mail



Wood and Olive Oil

In your article "Is it the Best Historic Cleaners You Aren't Using?" (*Around the House, May*) you mentioned that olive oil brightens up worn, dried-out wood. Although it is a great way to whiten and condition oil-finished wood, olive oil and other petroleum-based materials need to be used sparingly. Mineral oil is best for wood, especially for cutting boards and other wood that will be in contact with food. Also, adding a little beeswax to the oil will make it more water resistant.

MARIE HUNTER FOREST PARK, GA.

The editor reply: The tip was only meant for your touch-up of oil-finished trim and cabinetry, which would use a diluted amount. So yes, for butcher block or other wood in contact with food, use mineral oil. For major applications to areas such as floors or cabinetry, oiling of such as linseed or tung, or a commercial oil is best.

Triple Threat

I am an audiophile and a charter subscriber to *SOA*. I read it cover to cover each month several times perhaps. Furthermore, I have kept better informed with the e-mail newsletters you send. I enjoy them all. And I watch the PBS

series; my wife knows exactly where I am each Saturday morning. Thanks for the many, many years of great service and the on-line store that have been credited from reading the features and product information in your pages.

PAUL ROBERT BARNHILL, D.C.

Project Procrastination

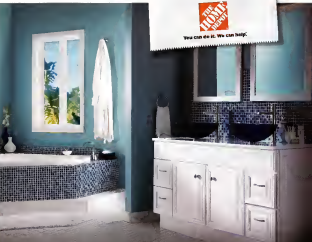
[Re: "Unfinished Business," Chuck Eckstein asks, say on the cause of incomplete home projects.] Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! I don't think you should just leap willy-nilly from Stage 1—"That is a great idea!"—to Stage 2—"I bought all the stuff." I do call you Action Guy if you can do that! My Stage 2 is "Hm—what such a great idea?" Then I think, "Maybe I should think about it a while." (Overthinking is like a two or five.) "How will this impact all of my other (unfinished) projects once they're [the ha] finished?" and, of course, "But I can't really start this because I have to do that and that and that..." I have managed to make my way to purchasing, for some of my projects, but now I'm thinking about entering my dream to have room to store all that stuff—seriously at all times.

A.L. HUFF TUCSON, ARIZ.

corrections

Paint Design. May: The printed color palette for the article for the porch railing, "Tobacco Blue (#544)" is by Sherwin Williams Whitehouse. We do not. Though when Sherwin discontinued their custom shades, Oldcastle has #544 D-4.

Ask The Old House Man. The best and best-selling flooring item for a bathroom is a solid wood floor. We specified a 1/2" thick solid wood flooring for a bathroom but counterexamples are a few left here.



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Lowe's

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DON'T GET NAILED

WHEN IN THE HAMMER HOME SAFETY TIPS FOR ONE COMMON POWER TOOL...

Despite the joke that so often seems to accompany media reports of nail-gun accidents, the risk of injury from such injuries is nothing to laugh at. There are some 14,000 incidents a year among nonprofessionals, according to reports. Most injuries are simple, but some puncture wounds. And gun-driven nails can also cause more serious problems. They're powerful enough to fracture bones, including the ones that surround your very delicate gray matter. To keep yourself safe, read your tool manual. Then read these additional tips from *This Old House* general contractor Tom Silva near your workbench. —JAMES FERGUSON

SAFE HOUSE

1. **Take your finger off the trigger** immediately after you've driven a fastener. And never carry the nail gun with your finger hooked to the trigger.

2. **Use a model with a sequential trip trigger.** It only fires after the nose is pressed against the workpiece. Consider: trip is ready to shoot at once.

3. **Wear safety glasses.** As careful as you are, a nail can still glance off a hand or knee and strike your eye or nail you.

4. **Never aim the business end at a hand or any body part.** Even from the other side of a workpiece, nail-gun gas thrust can injure you.

5. **Keep eyes at least 12 inches to the side of the impact point.** Fired nails can fly back, poking through unexpectedly.

6. **Remember the gun fires its power instantaneously.** That's a must when loading or when clearing jams.



Be Your Own Lifeguard

TAKE THESE PRECAUTIONS TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY FROM POOL HAZARDS

By all means, delight in the last days of summer. Just remember: If you have a pool, you've got the responsibility, especially when children are around. And to help you avoid making one of the 2,800 pool-related ER visits that burst everyone's bubble each summer, we asked the Consumer Products Safety Commission about precautions. Besides staying alert, the agency's advice was, "Layer your defenses!" Here's its checklist:

1. **FENCING.** Whether chain-link or wood, make it at least 4 feet high with a self-closing gate. (Some states require better fences: check your local building codes.) Fences should be no taller than 2 1/2 inches between panels or slats or larger than 1 1/4 square inches in the chain-link. These can act as a child's foothold.
2. **POOL GATES.** Whether manual or automatic, get one that mounts to the deck, meets American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards for performance and safety, and can hold the weight of two adults plus a child in case it takes two for the moon.
3. **ALARMS.** Simple, magnetic door alarms on automatic leading to the pool can buy time to react if a child approaches the water unattended. Ring for an underwater-type alarm that's attached to the pool's edge or float, and sends changes to the water level. Choose ones that sound within 7 seconds of a breach, continue for 30 seconds, and are loud enough to be heard together at the pool—or the house.
4. **RESCUE EQUIPMENT.** Next to the pool, always station a life preserver and shepherd's hook for fishing out anyone who needs help getting back to dry land. —ANNE L. ROEDER

For more pool safety information, go to thisoldhouse.com/safetytips

ORIGIN QUESTION

Millwright-turned-machine-builder Stuart Smith built many shapers and grinders to make lathe-turned furniture for his local, 30th-century-old shop. He has turned the first combined wood mill to work with multiple blades. When did his company, Dale Machinery, patent the cutting edge?

A. 1999 B. 1994 C. 1972 D. 1953

(Turn to "Origin Answer" page 24)



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Planting Late?

Never mind the excuses. Just thank your lucky stars when summer gardening is a prospect where procrastination pays off in more late flowers. In fact, while many common plants begin to flounder in the heat, annual weeds and tropical perennials peak around this time of year. They're also cheap, so succulent celeriac and melon.



GOOD BY SPILLINGS

- **Miscanthus:** This late-blooming grass is a great choice for a garden bed.
- **Monarda:** A 4-foot-high plant. Good for a garden bed.
- **Agrostis:** A late-blooming grass. Good for a garden bed.

TIP

For a real show, try planting late-blooming plants in a garden bed. They're also cheap, so succulent celeriac and melon.



Here's what's in the box: a small, portable, and easy to use. It's a great choice for a garden bed. They're also cheap, so succulent celeriac and melon.

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30 USBS

CHALK

Branded by everyone from grade schoolers to cops, chalk is the least transparent marker. Here are some tips for making the most of the powdery staple. —MICKY LORR

1. **FOR MARKS:** Chalk is a great choice for a garden bed. They're also cheap, so succulent celeriac and melon.

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High-Tech Toilet Seats

PRIDES WITH A SOFT TOUCH LET YOU BOLDLY GO AS NO MAN HAS GONE BEFORE

Back in the day, toilet seats had a simple purpose: They were meant for sitting. But in a technologically world now teeming with innovation and technology, toilet seats that make the ancient seats look so crude UFO-revolutionary. Luckily, manufacturers are now offering computerized, retractable toilet seats that glow in the dark, massage, deodorize, and even simulate the feel of toilet paper. (It's not a typo.) And you won't be guilty of cash (they don't charge), a power source (batteries or no cord), depending on the model, and a couple ounces of heavy-duty TP (most models spray water and blow air). —NATASHA KOSLOWSKI

Kohler's C3-000, \$1,300, combines cleansing action with light under the seat—as it divides in a single light

Broan's B300, \$100, is the largest option—on lighted toilet seats, just one Broan's remote controls a functioning fan in the house



Toto's Washlet B300, \$1,500, is what it does: Cleansing (not a water jet) your front and back and provides air drying for a TP-free toilet.

DESTINATIONS

Elfreth's Alley, Philadelphia

What began in 1702 as a cobblestone cartway for loading goods from the docks of the Delaware into a small row of Philadelphia row houses has become a national landmark. Elfreth's Alley boasts some of the best-preserved Georgian brick row houses since inhabited by 18th- and 19th-century merchants, ministers, and sailors, and the occasional sea captain. The oldest original house dates back to 1728 (the newest was built in 1836). Tours are available, but you may wish to welcome House 228. Built in 1763 by John and Jeremiah Elfreth, it is now home to the Elfreth's Alley Museum. Go local, go Philly, for a good old-fashioned Fourth of July celebration, complete with fireworks over the Delaware River—to be part of, back drop for this is America's architectural tour. Walk it, refreshingly. —HEIDI HENDON



TOP: Just 30 feet wide, Elfreth's Alley has been a street since 1702. It is typical of the old streets developed in Philadelphia during the 17th and early 18th centuries. ABOVE: A new body of the street, being over



You can only brush your teeth over one sink at a time, but that doesn't mean people don't want to choose which sink. According to a poll of industry pros conducted by the National Association of Home Builders, nearly every bathroom will have a double-basin vanity by 2025.

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NEED TO KNOW

APPLIANCE SCIENCE

Burning to upgrade your cooking space? Don't let these innovations escape your notice

Wigger, smaller, higher tech, lower profile... the newest in kitchen appliances are multiplying faster than the cooking and cleanup chores they're meant to simplify. Just in case you haven't wandered the appliance aisles in awhile, there's a whole raft of new problem-solvers out there. Here are some to be on the lookout for:

1 **If you have: Custom food-storage requirements...** Consider: Modular fridge components, whether you need a drawer that adjusts from freezer to fridge temps to defrost your roast (haier.com) or just want to customize the interior of your 48-inch fridge with—or without—frizzer and wine-cooler compartments (jabbhenappliances.com).

2 **If you have: The urge for an appliance that's as sleekly designed as your iPod.** Consider: Now single and double wall ovens with lockable "i" slide controls set to hit stores in November (jennieshome.com).

3 **If you have: Two holiday turkeys to cook.** Consider: The fuller capacity 36-inch ranges as more and more companies tout their products as having the most cubic feet of interior oven space (jennieshome.com, samsung.com).

4 **If you have: A house that's vulnerable to power outages...and has wireless Internet.** Consider: Working till early 2008, when Whole debuts a new line of Indesit-equipped with "Remote Vision" hardware that will e-mail your local service center if it detects a fault (loss of power, water leakage) which in turn will call your cell phone

5 **If you have: A kitchen that's open to a great room.** Consider: One of the new low-profile induction cooktops with a smooth glass surface that fades into the background and is a snap to keep clean. Since it only conducts heat directly into the cookware, it won't warm up the kitchen like conventional burners. Coming in early 2008: a cooktop with gas burners that lower out of sight when not in use (justlikepaycom).

6 **If you have: An issue with range hoods that threaten to knock your noggin.** Consider: A height-adjustable vent hood. There are plenty of downdraft models that disappear into the island, but due to stores this winter, a ceiling-mounted hood that lowers for optimum suction, then raises up for maximum headspace (jennieshome.com).

7 **If you have: Trouble finding a suitable counter spot for the TV.** Consider: An appliance with an LCD screen built right in, whether a two-door refrigerator (lg.com) or the new pro-style vent hood debuting in 2008 (jennieshome.com).

8 **If you have: A kitchen that's a tight squeeze.** Consider: Conatoga cooking center clustered with conventional convection, speed-cook, and microwave ovens, and warming drawers, all in a space-saving 24-inch size, now available from a growing number of manufacturers.

9 **If you have: A bunkering for the very latest pro-style add-on.** Consider: A restaurant-quality salamander broiler with an adjustable rack system, either built in or freestanding (bluestar.com).

10 **If you have: The urge to color-match your appliances to your backsplash.** Consider: A pro-style range in one of 130 custom colors (bluestar.com) or a vent hood that comes ready to receive your own tile, glass, plaster or paint (loshyonline.com).



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when you can't sleep, you can't dream. But now there's Rozzerem, a sleep aid like no other. Rozzerem is approved for adults having trouble falling asleep. In fact, it's the first and only prescription sleep aid that is clinical studies shown to provide fast relief. Take a sleep when you don't. Your doctor can explain why Rozzerem is so different. **Important safety information:** Don't take Rozzerem if you're taking "Cialis" (tadalafil) or have severe liver problems. Avoid taking it with alcohol. Don't drive or operate machinery until you know how you'll react to Rozzerem. Rozzerem may affect some herbicides. Consult your doctor about how this may affect you, as if your reaction doesn't improve. Take Rozzerem right before bed. Side effects may include drowsiness, fatigue and dizziness. Ask your doctor if Rozzerem is right for you. Visit rozzerem.com or call 877-891-1545 for more information. Your doctor may give you

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KITCHEN DESIGN



BEFORE: The kitchen was dark and cramped with a vision. After: White cabinetry and granite countertops make the room feel clean and bright. Island materials and varying heights turn the island into a socializer with the Sub-Zero freezer drawers in the right of place.

Problem: A kitchen designer's kitchen wasn't efficient—and wasn't her style.

Solution: A fresh look and clever design make a space super-functional. Here's how »

EVER WONDERED IF A KITCHEN DESIGNER'S dream kitchen looks like? For Corie Deane Corcoran, it doesn't have the curved-wood cabinets and gleamy granite countertop area as so many showrooms. In fact, after moving into her Colonial Revival in New Canaan, Connecticut, she stripped out just such a kitchen to get her stamp on the space. "It didn't reflect me, or the way I cook," says Corcoran, who prefers classic white cabinets with pale marble countertops, plus convenient drawer storage that's easy to find from behind to the island. The single sink and radiating appliances weren't optional, either, for someone who loves to entertain, whether she's having a casual buffet, a sit-down dinner, or the occasional formal party.

So after gutting the room and adding to contents to a contractor for \$12,000, Corcoran set about reimagining every inch. She got rid of the melamine-fronted negotiator post by installing a wood beam, leaving up room for a larger island with a sink and seating. She picked up granite appliances throughout. She got rid of the melamine-fronted negotiator post by installing a wood beam, leaving up room for a larger island with a sink and seating. She picked up granite appliances throughout. She got rid of the melamine-fronted negotiator post by installing a wood beam, leaving up room for a larger island with a sink and seating. She picked up granite appliances throughout.

BY KELLY BEHND
PHOTOGRAPHS BY AIMEE HERRING

The Plan

>> Cluster the appliances, add a second sink, and put in tons more drawer storage

What They Did

1 | ENLARGED THE FOOTPRINT
SLIGHTLY Taking 2 feet from the family room allowed for a bigger L-shaped pantry which absorbs enlarged rooms that holds Wolf double ovens, a microwave, and a Decor warming drawer. Two feet from the dining room contributed to a new butter pantry where a swinging door had stood. The anteroom took another sink, a dishwasher, and a new cooler, serving as a drop-in refrigerator.

2 | MADE EVERY INCH USABLE By removing anteroom island at the center of the room that had obstructed view of the patio through the French doors but also accounts the side of the island where the owner wanted guests to gather. Now a 23-foot island flows in the living corner the food.

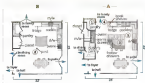
3 | REDESIGNED THE ISLAND and enlarged by 25 feet in length and width. Where the butcher block work surface, granite and island had been, a new shape, separate to the eating area—the bar and the table—forms the cooking area. Its swinging shape also adds traffic into the family room.

4 | ADDED AN ANCHOR DOORWAY where French doors had stood as another way to encourage flow from the kitchen into the family room.

5 | INCREASED DRAWER STORAGE with sturdy 24-inch-deep pullouts on the sides of the island, along the island and the range for convenient access to baking supplies and food storage containers.



above: The 48-inch stainless steel island has a custom design, stainless hood on all commercial kitchens. It and the six burner range with grill signal this is a serious cooking space.



Maplewood designed by David L. Brown
BrownL.com/interiors



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6 | ROTATED The kitchen island door panel for parking, mounting, and storage. A larger curved stainless steel apron, gathering away from the sink and countertop, a second sink, serving, 2 feet from the family room and surrounding the pantry, created space to clarify the island. And rotating 2 feet from the dining room allowed for a better spacing between it and the kitchen.

STYLING: JENNIFER L. BROWN

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CLOSET DESIGN

Problem: A first-round redo created a big but bare-bones dressing closet.

Solution: **Move the doorway to improve traffic flow and upgrade the storage built-ins. Here's how >>**



FOR ANYONE WHO TRAVELS YEAR-ROUND, packing a bag in the wee hours is largely routine stuff. But for the spouse who's trying to juggle a small child and the house, it's rarely one of life's little annoyances. Which is why one Karol worth, Illinois, couple turned an unused bedroom off their master bath into a spacious closet when they moved into their 1920s Georgian a decade ago. The thinking was that this would allow the husband, who travels weekly, to do his, who travels monthly, to comfortably lay out clothes without running the others.

Though the plan was a success, design was therapy wasn't living up to its potential. Limestone built-ins around the walls, the lighting was dim, and the clothes couldn't handle the couple's growing wardrobe. So they asked architect Charles Cook to re-work it as part of a master renovation.

In addition to getting the 14-by-36-foot room, Cook relocated the door frame corner to the center of the wall that connects it to the bath, improving traffic flow and setting the stage for a gorgeous, symmetrical design. On the far wall, he created a stepped built-in unit, and on each of the side walls, he added three wardrobes—for a total of 42 linear feet of hanging space. A middle support storage island provided a huggable landing surface. And recessed and a pendant light would ensure there was no fumbling in the dark when trying to coordinate shirt and tie.

The built-ins, with turntable-like rod-and-ribbon detailing on the edges, were powder-coated. "They seemed the space to look elegant, like a fine clothing store," says Cook. "But the main thing was to make it not feel like a closet."

BY JO JAGGERS
PHOTOGRAPH BY BLAN SIMPSON

Expected island in the dressing suite serves as a built-in unit in the closet. It has drawers on each side (one for her, one for him) and a hanging rod.

A photograph of a walk-in closet. On the left, there is a built-in wooden bench with a large mirror mounted above it. The mirror reflects the interior of the closet, showing hanging clothes and shelves. The closet is well-lit, and the wooden finish is light-colored.

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Confessions of an Architecture Victim

» I thought building a new house would be easier than fixing up an old one. I was wrong.

BY DANIEL ARNET
ILLUSTRATION BY SERGE BUGH

SHORTLY AFTER WE MOVED into the rental studio house we'd just built for ourselves, the neighbors showed up for the very first time. "So where's the house?" he asked proudly.

"It's just building right behind me," I replied, trying not to sound smug. "The one I just came out of."

"No kidding?"

We got that a lot. In our semi-rural area—about equally divided between 200-year-old clapboard farmhouses and mid-century California stucco, except for being beige, wouldn't look out of place on a *Mingely* board—we're the wardens' house around. It's kind of a gulf-wing country place converted to emergency steel and divided into two main sections. We're known to us by the name the North Tractor and the South Tractor because when we finally finished building the house, a tractor was about all we could afford to live in.

We decided to build modern because we didn't have the money to tackle the older farm-copiers that were available. Columns? Egg-and-dart moldings? We thought, Hah! We don't need no stinkin' egg-and-dart moldings! We're free! But we soon learned that building modern comes with its own silver-lined headaches. In our house, we even plywooded outside corners: other people reserve for antique columns. We live over where to find the windowed address numbers, or whether people will recognize that the given glowing shape outside is actually a doorbell. Even the kids can't escape. When we built them a playset, it had to have a corrugated roof to go with the house.

Constructing such an eccentric piece of design in public is guaranteed to make people question your sanity. Your builder will look at the plans, look at you, look back at the plans, and look at you again, over and over. And your neighbors will see



Columns? Egg-and-dart moldings?
We thought, Hah!
We don't need no stinkin'
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● AROUND MY HOUSE



Even the kids can't escape our obsession. When we built them a playset, it had to have a corrugated roof to go with the house.

you for the garbanc archaicness wishes you've become.

From above perspective, the best thing about our place is that it's invisible. We're an easy back on a long, narrow driveway obscured by trees. Nevertheless, I can tell it makes some people so happy just knowing this place exists that they've signed back here. One of the house everyone mentions when asked why the village suddenly felt the need to set up an architectural review board.

The steel door went to Barker before most of all. Once, when my mother-in-law made a comment about it, I asked what was on the outside of her house. "Aluminum siding," she said, as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

People do wonder about it though, so let me answer some of the most asked questions right off the bat. 1) It's fine as summer. It has regular walls underneath with inside too and everything, although on sunny days the reflections come across the windows. 2) That's why we have lightning rods every few feet along the roof. So far, no good.

3) Because they were out of beige vinyl in the home center that day. Okay, that last one is a fib. We chose corrugated steel because it was expensive to buy, quick to install, and never needs painting. Okay, that's another fib. Those personal things are valid, but to be honest, we thought it was as easy as well as cheap—just like us, at 1

PHOTO: JAMES H. HARRIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



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● AROUND MY HOUSE

over the idea of revisiting my wife.

When people wonder why anyone would build a house like ours, they rarely consider the many advantages of a home that looks like a house research facility. For instance, our house goes great with the satellite dish. And when the tax inspector comes by to produce a valuation, we're not any poorer, since it doesn't take much convincing for him to conclude that nobody in his right mind would buy the place.

They'll give it more leeway to look weird. What they don't know about is my intense open-mindedness, when I was finished, that there was no room for the sofa I find essential for deep thinking, particularly the deep thinking I do after a big lunch. The solution to this involves no electric micro-bridged thing I got at a local charity auction. I think deep thought is in every afternoon.

The tragedy of modern design assembly techniques is the chil-

I'm not saying our house is scary-looking, but in eight years we've never had a trick-or-treater. (Note to kids: Eight-year-old Reese's still taste good!)

Because we're an innovative variety without money, we often find ourselves perceiving various honest items from the hardware store for purposes other than their maker intended. "You want a bunch of electrical conduit for a curtain rod?" the guy at Lowe's asked in some puzzlement. "Why not go over to the aisle where they have the actual curtain rods and you buy one of them?" Because I need one 40 feet long, and it has to be as keeping with the general theme of naked steel.

My office, which is inside a green bin (obviously), is a case of this misapprehension was large. I ordered it by phone from a company out in Kansas, and the helpful fellow who worked there asked if I'd be using it to store grain. I, then, said, who used of the office purpose to which I'd be putting this bulky round building. "Just a little whole wheat bread at lunchtime," I said at last. "Does that qualify?"

I like my round office, and, surprisingly, most of my visitors like it too. People around here are familiar with grain bins, and an office isn't the same as a house, so

don't. My sons have borne up remarkably well under the constant stigma. One friend told them the place looks like "a pair of dump trucks," another asked thoughtfully whether it was bulletproof. I'm not saying our house is scary, but in eight years we've never had a trick-or-treater. (Note to kids: Eight-year-old Reese's still taste pretty good!)

Fortunately, the boys' definition is so complex that they themselves never want us to tell the place, which again as well. Our audience advised us to stop off the steel and replace it with timber if we ever decide to move. But I'm betting that sooner or later someone will figure out a way to commercialize all this useful technology that's been developed for the military. There maybe I can talk the local web-to-rental review group into taking up a collection for some high-tech siding that will make the place vanish altogether. ■

Michael David Abbot, author of *It's Built! The History and the Future of the House*, lives in New York's Hudson Valley.



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SALVAGE



Facade Fragments

► Use ornamental building blocks such as terra-cotta keystones and marble capitals as focal points inside and outside the house

BY AMY R. HUGHES PHOTOGRAPHS BY JESSICA PAUL

INROME, THEY LET YOU TOUCH THEM. The carved columns, fractured frieses, and other rocklike relics of ancient civilizations, I'm talking about. In fact, when visiting the Roman Forum with my husband a few summers ago, I even plopped myself down on what remained of a glass marble archway to rest my sore tourist feet. If it's done that at the Metropolitan Museum of Art or my hometown of New York City, they would have cuffed me off to the pillory.

Lucky for me, though, there are plenty of fascinating fragments—even if they're of somewhat more recent vintage—written with such salvaged parts in almost every American city. So when I want to combine with pieces of our country's architectural past, and those of my locale in particular, I head for Detroit's Old Depot. The back lot of this historic warehouse is filled with the most amazing stuff, mostly from the late 1800s and early 1900s when building styles went entire crazy, including a colorful glazed terra-cotta block from the Audubon Ballroom and Theatre (top right). In 1927, that's where residents of Washington Heights—the neighborhood where I live now—likely saw their first view of The Jazz Singer with Al Jolson. It's also where black national leader Malcolm X was gunned down in 1965, while addressing his followers live on the air.

In the 1990s, all backlot front facade of the Audubon was used, like so many other facades (the original Neoclassical-style Pennsylvania Station, for instance) and no longer (Victorian-era mansions

ABOVE CENTER: In the 1990s, terra-cotta fragments were carved to identify European immigrants who lived in the city. ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT: In 1927, some terra-cotta fragments had become more popular because they were more practical as models for the city.

TIP

To clean terra-cotta or stone with a pressure washer, use mild dish soap and water. Small chunks of mortar can be gently tapped off using a hammer and chisel.

in Hell's Kitchen buildings in New York City. Thankfully, when places like these come down, there are sometimes people with the sense to spare extras—stoves or mini-frigs, toasters, plates, and kettles—as they can be reused.

One such tractor in Devonshire Depot's ongoing Texas line. He recently helped the park out in early autumn of course to serve as the basis for a garden trail rock I wanted to build for a green-shaded forest (see home page). The piece was 15 inches long, with an egg-and-spear pattern. The price: \$75. I learned only one of the pros, but I was tempted to ask Dave whether he'd cut me a deal if I bought the down or so-called "occasional" Sank in a shallow trench; they would have made ideal low-key gifts.

Of course, there are lots of great ways to incorporate facade fragments inside the house, too. I would have loved to buy a turn-of-the-century grand old owl perched on a book, which would have shown the entrance to an elementary school in the Bronx. At \$2,500 it was pricier than my whole trip to Rome, but it would have looked great on the wall above my desk. My morning was not as much a threat as I felt from when I inherited my junker grand-old-something-tanish with a pair of Art Nouveau pilasters that she bragged about flanking either side of her bed.

I could think of a stylish reuse project for almost everything I saw. Four star-shaped lacquered bellows (\$100 a piece) could be legs for a glass-top coffee table. A single scrolling keychain could be reimagined over a front door or, for something different, mounted like a shelf on the wall.

Then there was the pair of 16th-century Italian marble column capitals from an estate on Rye Beach, New York. Decorated with Corinthian-style acanthus leaves, they reminded me of the fragments I saw at the Forum. And man, they would have made some pretty capital stools on which to sit and survey my act as ancient but not less beloved Washington Metro handcarper. ■



How I Turned a Cornice Into a Garden Tool Holder

With its deep ledge, this 19th-century terra-cotta cornice was perfect for the top shelf at the desk I wanted to build. All I needed was an old piece of wood to attach it to and a handful of books. Scouring in the TGD editorial closet, where we store props for photo shoots, I found just the thing: a book up beam with the publisher's name marks still visible on one side. After searching in vain at three different salvage yards for five-matching wrought-iron hooks, I ordered reproductions from houseofantiquehardware.com.

- Here's a step-by-step for putting all these elements together:
1. Attach the board to the cornice using polyurethane construction adhesive, and secure with a clamp until the glue dries.
2. Pre-drill shallow holes into the back of the board. I shaped brackets which fit inside recesses in the rear of the cornice to make sure the piece held tight. Secure the cornice side of the brackets with adhesive and the board side with screws.
3. Measure and attach on the board's face where the hooks will go (they should be an equal distance from each other and from the bottom edge of the cornice).
4. Push the hooks over the starter and drive the pins in.
5. Create a small gap between the cornice and the board. Stand the glass on the line, and lean it in the gap with your hand. The piece is likely to be heavy—this one was over 20 pounds—so be sure to use something strong to anchor it to the flooring.

— 100 —



For more on how to build a garden that thrives with nature, visit www.bhg.com/gardens.

NOT A STATE EMPLOYEE? SEE SUBMITTERS PAGE 540

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Figure 1

Twitter: @Twitter

Understand the risks. See the benefits.

What should I know about NSAIDs?

When it comes to relieving arthritis pain, you may think some prescription NSAID pain relievers, like ibuprofen and naproxen, don't have any cardiovascular risks. But based on the available research, that's not clear. And if you look closer, the FDA requires all these NSAID pain relievers, including Celebrex, to have the same cardiovascular warning.

What about heart attack or stroke?

Any prescription NSAID, including Celebrex, may increase the chance of heart attack or stroke, which can lead to death. The chance increases if you have heart disease or risk factors for it, such as high blood pressure, or when NSAIDs are taken for long periods.

How do NSAIDs affect my stomach?

All NSAIDs, including Celebrex, also increase the chance of stomach and intestine problems, such as bleeding and ulcers, which can occur without warning and may cause death. With any of these medicines, patients also taking aspirin and the elderly are at increased risk for stomach bleeding and ulcers.

What does this mean for Celebrex?

While all NSAIDs have some of the same warnings, they all treat arthritis pain. But since individual results may vary, having options is important. As NSAID, like Celebrex, may be one option. In fact, prescription Celebrex has never been taken off the market. Based on the available data, the FDA stated that for certain patients Celebrex's benefits outweigh the risks. But only you and your doctor can make that decision.

What are the benefits?

In clinical studies, a lower percentage of patients on Celebrex reported indigestion, abdominal pain and nausea versus prescription ibuprofen and naproxen. Celebrex can be used with low-dose aspirin. Other prescription NSAIDs aren't generally recommended with aspirin.

What does it do for arthritis pain?

Celebrex relieves arthritis pain, stiffness and inflammation. Just one 200 mg dose provides 24-hour relief.

Any other precautions?

Use at the lowest dose possible for the shortest time based on treatment goals. Do not take Celebrex if you're pregnant or have had allergic reactions to aspirin or sulfonamides. All NSAIDs, including Celebrex, increase the chance of serious skin reactions. And tell your doctor if you've had kidney or liver problems.

What next?

For many with arthritis pain, not treating is not an option. Talk to your doctor about Celebrex and see what's right for you.

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The best ways to reduce water use: Choose drought-tolerant plants adapted to your site's climate, soil type, and sun exposure. Limit the expense of yard devoted to perpetually thirsty turf grass. And plant at least one tree in your yard—for shade, for beauty, and for posterity.

Trees»

To water transplants efficiently, shovel soil and mulch into a donut-shaped berm as wide as the tree branches. Fill the berm with water using a hose or bucket, then let it percolate into the soil slowly.

1. CIRCULAR MULCHER: Shaped to fit around burlap or tree rings, this mulcher is designed to be used in a circular pattern around the base of a tree. It's made of heavy-duty plastic and is made in a circular pattern around the base of a tree. It's made of heavy-duty plastic and is made in a circular pattern around the base of a tree.

2. CUT TO THE ROOT: Once established, trees typically get by on their own, but even mature species need to be irrigated for the first year or two. Easy Garden's Root-Ring Feeder gives the job a boost with its built-in, self-watering system. It's made of heavy-duty plastic and is made in a circular pattern around the base of a tree.

3. SECRET INGREDIENT: One secret ingredient to healthy plants is soil. A good soil mix is made of peat moss, perlite, and a balanced fertilizer. It's made of peat moss, perlite, and a balanced fertilizer.

4. WATERING WARD: One of the best ways to water plants is to use a watering can. It's made of plastic and has a long handle. It's made of plastic and has a long handle.

5. CONTAINER DEEP KIT: Why buy a watering can when you can have a container deep kit? It's made of plastic and has a long handle. It's made of plastic and has a long handle.

6. EMERGENCY CONTROLLER: One of the best ways to water plants is to use a watering can. It's made of plastic and has a long handle. It's made of plastic and has a long handle.

Protect The Great Indoors

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Minwax® is the world's most trusted name in wood finishing. With over 100 years of experience, Minwax® has a reputation for producing high-quality, clear finishes that protect and enhance the natural beauty of wood. Minwax® products are available in a variety of finishes, including Polyurethane, Varnish, and Stain. Minwax® products are available in a variety of finishes, including Polyurethane, Varnish, and Stain.

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UNDERSTANDING YOUR OLDER VEHICLE'S NEEDS

BROUGHT TO YOU BY
CASTROL GTX HIGH MILEAGE

Incredibly two-thirds of all vehicles on the road today fall into the higher-mileage category, that's 75,000 miles and more. As your vehicle ages, the pressure on your engine to perform increases dramatically in order to combat the aging process - and help extend your engine's life. It's good to first understand how your high-mileage engine is feeling.

As your vehicle ages, changes occur that lead to reduced engine performance. What are the symptoms and consequences of decreased performance?

- Oil breaks down faster
- Fuel consumption rises
- Soots and deposits may start to dry out, sludge or become extremely brittle
- Oil passages can get clogged which can restrict flow to engine parts driving lubrication
- Engine stress increases as power decreases

One major breakthrough in maintaining the health of an older car is a high-mileage motor oil, such as GTX High Mileage. It offers superior protection your older car deserves because it is specially engineered for vehicles with over 75,000 miles. Below are a few key reasons why it's important to pay attention to your engine's needs.

- Dirty engines contaminate new oil quickly, reducing lubricating power
- Gumming deposits from soot, acids, condensation and fuel build-up can cause plugs
- Higher-mileage engines are challenged by driving conditions such as stop-and-go traffic, weather and long periods of idling

In many ways, you control the fate of your car's engine. Whether you replace your car yourself or later, it is a show you can help give your engine a new lease on life. Remember to change your oil every 3,000 miles or 3 months, whichever comes first, follow the OEM recommended maintenance schedule and use a high quality motor oil such as Castrol GTX High Mileage.



HIGH MILEAGE MOTOR OIL VS. CONVENTIONAL MOTOR OIL:

Is it possible for high-mileage engines to feel and act younger than their age? If you want to maintain your older engine's performance, you will want a motor oil specially engineered to handle the job.

For cars with over 75,000 miles, the formula for conventional oil can fall short and is a premium quality motor oil like GTX High Mileage. Benefits include:

- Superior protection against oil burn-off versus conventional oils
- Seal conditioners to help prevent and reduce leakage
- Unsurpassed wear protection and reduced deposit formation to maximize engine performance

DON'T LET YOUR ENGINE'S PROTECTION GO UP IN SMOKE



SUPERIOR OIL BURN-OFF PROTECTION

All the hard work you put into your car isn't worth much if your engine's protection vaporizes. In high-mileage cars, conventional oils can burn off faster. After 75,000 miles, step up to Castrol GTX High Mileage, with unique additives conventional oils don't have. Industry lab tests prove it provides superior oil burn-off protection — 17% better than leading conventional oils.* You've taken your car this far. Now take it farther with Castrol GTX High Mileage.

*ASTM D5682, Castrol GTX High Mileage vs. Conventional Oil


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The highly reviewed Bose® Wave® music system is available with an optional Multi-CD Changer.

When the Bose® Wave® music system was introduced, Jonathan Lickoff of the *Philadelphia Daily News* said, "This sleek, compact music maker couldn't be easier to operate. Yet sophisticated technology hidden inside makes this an extraordinary performer." Today, the system offers you even more, thanks to an optional Multi-CD Changer that has been designed exclusively for the Wave® music system.

Elegantly small, with sound that brings new life to music. Here the Wave® music system for yourself. Robert J. says, "You'll think you're listening to a system that costs five times more. You can even connect your TV or MP3 player for better sound. As David Nevitt, the *Gadget Guy*, says, "It can easily replace whatever component system you currently have." And the Wave® music system fits almost anywhere.

The optional Multi-CD Changer lets you enjoy premium sound for hours on end. Just slide one of your favorite CDs or MP3 CDs into the Wave® music system and press away into the Multi-CD Changer. They work as one to deliver performance after endless performance with quality that *Newsday's* Stephen Williams says made him "sit up and listen and smile."

All in one simplicity. A credit card style remote control lets you easily operate both the Wave® music system and Multi-CD Changer. It's a convenience you'll appreciate when playing CDs or MP3 CDs, tuning into RDS/AM radio or setting the clock and alarm.

Take advantage of our 90-day, risk-free trial. Order the Wave® music system today. Better yet, order it with our Multi-CD Changer. With our Satisfaction Guarantee, you'll get 30 days to try them together in your own home. Compared the sound to larger, more expensive stereo. And when you call, ask about making **12 easy payments**, with no interest charges from Bose.™ The Wave® music system and Multi-CD Changer from Bose, the most respected name in sound.

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HOME TECH

Minding the House

» Wireless monitoring systems let you know what's going on at home, even when you're miles away

BY WILSON ROTHMAN
ILLUSTRATION BY TUDOR SIMONE

ON A FRIDAY NIGHT not long after my wife and I moved into our new townhouse, we finished the dishes and headed to the basement to watch TV. An 8-year-old girl passed the bathroom, she threw the carpet outside left son of...agency. With that familiar, cold, homeowner's fear rising, she pulled inside and saw that all of the water—and still dripping faucets—we'd worked down the kitchen sink had come back up through the basement drain, soaking the floor and all the carpeting around it.

Turn out the previous owner had dumped bacon grease down the pipes, causing tremendous damage to the sewage line. Perhaps cooking could have prevented the eventual call to Roto-Rooter. But we'd had a wireless home-monitoring system in place, so we'd have known the moment the tank began to overflow instead of when it was too late.

By communicating with sensors that you place around the house, these systems can tell you whether your basement is flooding, if the furnace cuts out in the dead of winter while you're at work, or if you've slipped down and forgotten to close the garage door. They can be set up to send alerts via e-mail, a cell-phone text message, or on a portable key fob you can carry in your pocket. If you want to see a more complete picture of your home from far away, some systems let you install video cameras as well as sensors and show you what's happening via a secure Web page.

Within five years, industry watchers say, remote monitoring systems will be standard add-ons to your cable or phone service. But if you're not inclined to wait, there



are a handful of out-of-the-box versions on the market now that are easy for homeowners, even non-tech geeks, to set up and use.

The simplest type of system works as radio-frequency technology. Alarm systems about the size of a hardback book keep track of battery-powered sensors you install around the house. You can program them to detect whether a door or window is open or closed, if a siren is leaking, or if the temperature drops below a preset level. If you're worried about pipes freezing in the basement, for example, stick a sensor to the space heater risk (your cause with double-sided tape), and you'll get an alert when the mercury falls. Flood sensors need a message when they're covered with water. Place them under the water heater or behind the washing machine; it could have used one more cup bakeware today.

In addition to these basic sensors, most systems offer a range of add-ons. Put a motion detector in the hallway, and you'll be alerted if a toddler or an elderly relative gets up in the middle of the night. Stick a tilt sensor on your garage door—or the lid of your jewelry box—to know if it's been opened. One option, EcoSense Home Hubsense, has a power sensor, which can tell you if you've forgotten to turn off the coffee maker or iron, or if the kitchen watching TV when they're supposed

to be asleep. Power sensors can also verify you end-of-day of an emergency, too. If your sump pump or well pump unexpectedly runs on, EcoSense also alerts a water-leak sensor installed in the motor-driven valve on the supply pipe, then powers wireless water sensors anywhere you fear a leak. Within seconds of water detection, the sensor sends a signal to the controller, then using cell phone service.

If you want to see what's happening at home, you'll need a system that lets you control cameras as well as sensors. But unlike simpler systems that require only a phone line to send you alert messages, video-capable systems require you to have a broadband Internet connection. Two leading camera-equipped options, AT&T Remote Monitor and eControl Networks, connect secure Web pages, where you can view and monitor your home. (To access all features, these services require a subscription fee, generally \$10 to \$15 a month.) You can program the cameras for "iWatch" scenarios. If the camera sensor is triggered, then take 15 seconds of video and e-mail it to you.

For most of us, these systems are unlikely to replace the traditional burglar and fire alarm trips you get. One problem: Full home coverage costs quite a bit more than the many discount deals you can get on old-fashioned security systems by browsing the Internet.



Nearly 40 percent of Americans, according to a recent survey, worry once they've left the house about whether they left the garage door open or an appliance turned on.

But for early adopters, these new tech gadgets are not to be missed. They provide a remarkably detailed view of your house, making you feel at home even when you're away. ■



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Security Gear

Security comes at a price—but fortunately not a huge one. Here are three home system options that will buy you some peace of mind.



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ADVAIR HOME MONITOR
Basic system, camera and remote control. Approximate cost: \$180. Monthly fee: \$10.



ADVAIR HOME WORKS
Basic system, long-life, remote control and remote control. Approximate cost: \$180. Monthly fee: \$10.

"Energy efficiency is as important to most home buyers as granite counters and good schools."

—JENN BILLOREK (JENN@RECYCLE)

small, four upstairs KRM Real Estate in Los Angeles to more established names like Redfin.

Environmentally savvy buyers can be a boon for sellers, especially those who have invested money in energy-saving improvements and other efficient features. "We show them there are agents out there who can appreciate their green houses and effectively market them," Belkadi says. After all, if a home owner sells \$15,000 into seller's pocket, he'll want to reap the benefit when it comes time to sell. And if prospective buyers don't know a ditty about solar, they'll have a hard time comprehending what might seem like an inflated asking price. A broker who's well-versed in the topic can allude to the long-term financial benefits of solar energy and explain why it might end up saving the new homeowners a boatload of money in the long run.

Green brokers are also hip to subtle nuances other agents might overlook. When Mark Wheeler was showing a bungalow in Portland, Oregon, he noticed potential buyers circling their thumb at the stove's regression, which is easy to maintain and conserves water, and the local recycling program. While the eventual buyers were initially attracted to the family-friendly neighborhood, "they were also asked about the green stuff," Wheeler says.

If you're a hard-core greenie looking to build your own environmentally conscious dream house, one of these pros can help you out, too. Atlanta-based Ecobroker Jennifer Sprey is working with client Eric Callahan to find just the right green-friendly suburban green house. "Jennifer knows a lot about land management issues," Callahan says. "She knows what to look for in terms of things like drainage. She measures the trees and vegetation and checks for disease. If it doesn't look healthy to her, she'll do the research to figure out why."

Finding a Green Agent

■ To find green-certified Realtors in your area, visit the company's website at ecobroker.com.
 ■ You can also find brokers who specialize in green listings—as well as information on green builders, architects and designers—at moderngreenliving.com (click on Realtor under the "Professionals" category) or at theaware.com (click on "Find a Professional" then hit "Real Estate Agents").



Like Sprey, a longtime advocate for urban revitalization and smart growth, many agents working in green real estate have a background in environmental issues. "It was a natural for me," says Charlottesville, Virginia-based EcoBroker Roger Wossett, who is often hired by green developers to help market new properties. Before embarking on a career in real estate, Wossett worked his master's degree in environmental science and worked designing models for sustainable cities. He ties that knowledge to relevant topics on technologies like passive solar, high efficiency furnaces, and the occasional rain catchment system. "In any green project, there are usually 10 to 20 features that set the homes apart from ordinary houses," he says. "I can go into the details and benefits of each of them."

For home buyers, there may be ongoing benefits to working with green brokers. Ben Kaufman, who co-founded Seattle-based GreenWorks Realty with his father, Louis, in 2002, offers clients a "Healthy Home Assessment"—a review of the house's indoor air quality, energy efficiency, and the greenness of its building materials and construction methods. After making the necessary, GreenWorks agents can offer advice on no-upgrades new owners might want to consider. Such upgrades not only make the house more comfortable and cheaper to live in but also make it more marketable to future buyers.

GreenWorks adds to the incentive by leaving new homeowners with a gift package meant to encourage greener thinking in other aspects of their lives, including a box of organic food from locally owned farms, a gift certificate to a green building supply store, and a coupon for a car-sharing program. Sure, it's a marketing ploy, but it's also a great way to show that this new breed of agents has their hearts in the right place. "A lot of our clients come to us because they understand we are in the business of improving the livability of the region," says Kaufman. "They just see us as good guys." Ideas: Maybe the next generation of green real estate pros won't be known as much for their gold pocket in their car for their white—make that green—bats. ■

For more information on how to finance your green home with a green mortgage, go to greenhouse.com/mortgage



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By **KEVIN LAMPERT**
Photography by **JOHN A. BARNES**



Whether you're working in a field or in a shop, a level is a tool you need to get the job done. It's a tool that's been around for centuries, and it's still one of the most useful tools in a toolbox. A level is a tool that's used to determine if a surface is perfectly flat or if it's tilted. It's a tool that's used to make sure that a building is straight and that a road is level. It's a tool that's used to make sure that a piece of furniture is straight and that a picture is hanging straight. It's a tool that's used to make sure that a piece of machinery is level and that a piece of equipment is working properly. It's a tool that's used to make sure that a piece of equipment is level and that a piece of equipment is working properly.

The level is a tool that's used to determine if a surface is perfectly flat or if it's tilted. It's a tool that's used to make sure that a building is straight and that a road is level. It's a tool that's used to make sure that a piece of furniture is straight and that a picture is hanging straight. It's a tool that's used to make sure that a piece of machinery is level and that a piece of equipment is working properly. It's a tool that's used to make sure that a piece of equipment is level and that a piece of equipment is working properly.

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4 | ADD THE PITCHES
Align rotating vials on the Farnham Xtreme torqueline level allows you to measure degree perfect pitches. Using the built-in magnetic base, you can adjust them for pitch or plumb. 20 inches, \$23. starlineinc.com

5 | POST LEVEL
A 90-degree level and an electric strap hold the Postline level against the corners of square-edged beams and deck joists, providing a fast, one-position check for plumb. Magnetic on the base, level is engineered fence posts. The level also holds onto built-in style, for easy storage. \$8. kuper.com

6 | LANSBURG LEVEL
The heavy-duty level has two vials, each filled with a glass vial. When building, angle and plumb level, both retaining with built-in vials. One vial is also a convenient measuring block and you can use it as a guide if it's not along its length and from side to side. Available in plastic or mahogany (shown). \$48. lansburglevel.com

7 | LINE LEVEL
An 84-inch (not too highly accurate) level for carpenters and masons. The line level hangs from a line string to show if a course of bricks is level. The level is a portable, self-leveling tool that does. These days, most pros and homeowners have the line level in the house. \$4. johndev.com

8 | TRUCK-OUT TORREDO
The solid aluminum checkered torqueline is a 100-inch level with four different pitches: 1/4 inch, 1/2 inch, 3/4 inch, and 1 inch. It's a 100-inch level with four different pitches with the built-in vials when installing sidewalks or driveways. Four vials with magnets on the bottom, level is a 100-inch level with four different pitches. \$120. torredot.com

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margin for error,
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TIP

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angle near the lip.
The hole in the
nozzle should be
just big enough
to fit the joint
tightly. You don't.

Now You're Caulking

» Take aim at old, cruddy caulk, and give your tub a fresh new seal

BY JASON CARPENTER PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID CARMACK

YOU'RE IN THE CHAIRS WITH a spig of caulk. First it was the brown finger along the edges. Now on smooth and supple skin has turned brittle and crumbled, opening the way for stubborn colonies of mildew to take hold, or for water to seep through and ruin wallboard and framing nearby. Whether it's around your sink, between a tub and its surround, or covering the joint of your shower stall—it has got to go.

Fortunately, caulk is cheap, and applying it isn't difficult. All you need is an hour, a few common tools, and materials easily found at any hardware store. But to say so is to, you still have to do it right, so you'll be caulking again next year, says This Old House general contractor Tom Schoenke. "The key is to completely remove the old caulk, including the residue you can't see," he says. "Now we got to start fresh with a clean, smooth, dry surface."

Follow Tom's steps on the next page, and "you the old get five to ten years out of that stuff, easy," he says.



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60637



2 | SCRUB: A dry nonabrasive pad scrubs away every trace of ooble residue. (Clean up after silicone with a pad soaked in mineral spirits.) But to avoid scratching plastic features, use a soft rag dampened with mineral spirits, not a scouring pad. Wipe a damp cotton rag over the pond to remove the ooble dust and prepare the surface for the new ooble. Thoroughly dry the area with paper towels, a dryer, or a hair dryer.

Point it inside hole toward the joint, hold the gun perpendicular from the surface on either side of the joint and about 45-degrees out from it. Then apply steady pressure to the trigger system, move the gun smoothly along the entire length of the seam. Whether you push or pull the gun is a matter of personal preference. Take as many sweeps as you need, moving at a steady speed, make sure the time that caulk is flowing out of the nozzle. Too fast, and the bead will be too thin; too slow or breaks in the bead. Too slow and you'll waste material, and second sweeps will show up as

4) SealDCH As soon as the seams are tied, clamps are left (in rigor or paper) and pressed into the joint with your finger. Pulled along the joint in one continuous motion to shape the flesh quickly into a concave bend. Immediately walked the tape, one strip at a time. Taking care not to let the touch of the flesh catch. Things back and forth the head and tail alongside the tiny edges left by the tape. Let at least 24 hours for the scale to cure before using the muscle or fat.

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HOMEOWNER'S
HANDBOOK
WEEKEND
PROJECT SERIES

Hanging Exterior Shutters

BY HARRY SAWYERS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADRIAN SMITH

COST:
From \$150 to
\$700 per window

TIME:
The 2 hours per pair

DIFFICULTY:
Intermediate. Shutters are custom sized but getting them centered on the window opening has its challenges.

Recessed panel shutters with copper caps, \$300 a pair, tapered strap hangers, plate brackets, 3 inch-wide, shaker look, and pull rods, \$195, from Touchstone Shutters, touchstone.com.

SO WHAT IF YOU WANT to crank up the Bob Seger, dig on the deck chairs, turn up your coffee, and slide across the living room floor in socks? Get your under-pants and an outdoor shirt! Go right ahead—what you do in the privacy of your own home is, frankly, nobody's business. Just do the neighbors a favor: seal shutters the windows.

Recessed exterior shutters, which swing shut when you need them to, will do the trick easily. At The Old House technical editor Mark Powers draws on the following pages, you could pick over all pairs up in one weekend. There, made from privacy from prying eyes, you'll also get relief from the summer heat. A bonus: against storm winds, and a nice defense against arrowheads (if you're a 17th-century colonial, that is).

The bonus: Sealed with hundreds of hours of labor and a bright coat of paint, shutters will dress up the front of your house and add to its curb appeal. Which, we're guessing, is a better way to attract attention in your house than your half-dressed teenage to Tim Crane.

TOOLS FOR THIS PROJECT

- 5-MFT PLYWOOD TOOL: handy with any necessary notching or sanding touch-ups
- CHALK LINE
- SQUARE
- SPRINTERSH and TOLLER HAMMER
- DRILL/DRIVER with a set of corner-drilling bits
- 4-FOOT LEVEL
- 1/4-INCH SHUTTERS and hardware
- ADJUSTABLE KNECK

FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT US AT WWW.HOMESOURCE.COM

{ step by step }

1

Paint or finish the shutters

Paint or stain and finish the shutters before installing them (QUICK TIP: When painting prefinished shutters, use a small roller to seal the joints first, then paint the joint with a brush. Next, use a brush to paint the horizontal rails, then the vertical stiles, with long, buttered strokes.

When painting shutters with moisture blockers, make sure to open and close the shutter after you paint them to keep them from sticking.

Always paint all six sides of the shutters—including the top and bottom edges—to protect them against moisture infiltration.



TIP

2



Shim the shutters in place

Place one shutter in the window opening. Have a helper hold it as you shim it tight at the top and bottom. Position the other shutter the same way.

Once both shutters are firmly in the window casing, carefully reposition them so they're centered and surrounded by a 1/8-inch gap on all sides. Shim them as needed (LEFT).

TIP

A shutter's wider rail always goes at the bottom. On painted shutters, the simpler panels should face out when the shutter is closed. On stained shutters, the longer openings should face out when the shutter is closed.



4

TIP

Fasten the hinges to the shutter

Remove the shutter from the window opening and place them on sawhorses. Using a drill/driver, bore pilot holes at your marks through the strip on the top and bottom rails. Screw the strip hinges into position with the screws provided (LEFT).

After you have the shutters on sawhorses, position and loosen one pull rod the full length to one of the shutters. Place them just below the middle of the shutter where they can be secured through an open window (see photo at Step 5, below).

Hang the shutters in place. Make sure they swing comfortably enclosed the way.

To keep your drill bit from going all the way through the shutter, wrap a piece of tape several times around the bit at the depth of your screws so you know when to stop.

Mount the shutter dogs

Assemble the shutter dog and the top bolt that holds it away from the house. Open the shutters all the way. Position the dog on the siding under the shutter 4 inches in from the shutter's outer edge and 1 inch below the bottom edge. Holding the bolt up against the house,

check that it has enough contact with the shutter to hold it open. Then spin it sideways and check that the shutter can close it to swing closed.

Once you're satisfied with the dog's position, mark the bolt's location. Drill a pilot hole at the mark. Using a wrench, hand the bolt into the siding (RIGHT). Repeat the process for the other dog.



5

Install the hinge pintles

Stick the two parts of a hinge together and position them at the top of one shutter. Center the strip on the top rail and the pin (left) in the casing. Using a level, check that the pin is square. Mark the locations of the screw holes for both the strip and the pin.

Set aside the strip. Using a drill/driver fitted with a drill bit sized for your hardware's screws, drill pilot holes at the marks for the pin. Screw the pin to the casing (RIGHT). Repeat this step for the other upper pin.

Using a level, close a plumb line down the casement from the top pin to the approximate location of the lower hinge (NOTE: Use this as an indication for positioning, with marking for the lower hinge contained on the bottom rail, in the same manner as above). Screw the two lower pintles to the casing.

NOTE: This process works for the strip hinges shown here. Check the manufacturer's literature for instructions for other hinges.



6

Attach the locking hardware

Close the shutter and insert it into the middle of the window. With a helper, twist the shutter to lock position. The other pull rod will be the one you marked above. Mark the screw holes, drill pilot holes, and attach the pull.

Position the latch in line with the bolt and the pull below it. Slide the latch into the hole to make sure the shutter will lock properly when closed. Mark the screw holes (LEFT), drill pilot holes, and attach the latch. Squash a bead of silicone adhesive (the inside side of the casing) and slide it over the top edge of the shutter (INSET).



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WoodShapers.com/interior

{ buying guide }

A shutter dog is one of those house details that continuously confuses decoration with utility: holding shutters open with a simple curl or bold, whimsical cutout. Here are some of the dogs we find most expressive and attractive, from the subtle to the inspired.



1. BY THE SEASHORE

Iron shell shutter dog
\$65 each, \$117
houseofantiquesandmore.com

2. BEER AND WISE

Blue grape shutter dog
\$14 each, \$15
houseofantiquesandmore.com

3. COLORFUL CURLS

Iron curl shutter dog
\$14 each, \$25
houseofantiquesandmore.com

4. FURLED TIPS

Propeller dog \$14 each, \$50
houseofantiquesandmore.com

5. SELLING POINT

Hand Propeller dog mount
\$45, antiquesandmore.com

6. SILENT TALKER

Iron tail curl dog mount, \$36
antiquesandmore.com

7. LITTLE FISHING BOAT

Cast-iron fish on a hinge
locks spreader or photo down out
of the way \$55, dylsh-items.com

8. BLACKBERRY

Cast-iron dog mount, \$30
dylsh-items.com

9. FISHING BOAT

Cast-iron dog mount, \$20
phibetfishandmore.com

10. SEASHORE

Black stainless steel dog mount,
\$36, phibetfishandmore.com

11. PLATE, MOUNT, HOOK

Iron hammered iron, 2 1/2 inch
projector, \$35
charlesandmore.com

*All prices shown are per pair



Always use at least 10' from ceiling



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\$

3
kitchens3
budgets

Whether your bankroll is small, ample, or somewhere in between, it's possible to get the kitchen you crave at a price you can swallow. And we've got the case studies to prove it.

Okay, maybe you're not a millionaire. That doesn't mean you have to live with a kitchen that time-fogues. As the three roles on the following pages demonstrate, there's more at work in a well-planned renovation than money. Some careful planning, a lot of foregone luxuries, and a healthy dose of sweet equity can add up to satisfying results, even on a leaner-than-veganic budget. Sure, it takes flat-thoughts to pull off a job that doesn't resemble where they'll have the most impact, but when the dust clears, you can point to your new kitchen with pride, knowing that you can roll it out to fill up the fridge and entrance in style. So before you sacrifice stuff at the top of your wish list—whether it's glass-front cabinets, stone countertops, or high-performance appliances—read on to see how three homeowners with budgets ranging from less than \$10,000 to more than a loaded gold got the kitchens they wanted by making every dollar work for them.

BY AMANDA GERRY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TED MORRISON
PACKAGING BY COLETTE SCHMIDT DRYER

under \$20,000
KITCHEN
RENOVATION

around
\$40,000
KITCHEN
RENOVATION

\$100,000 plus
KITCHEN
RENOVATION

Same Places, New Faces

New cabinet fronts and doors, improved appliances, and a few cosmetic updates give an extended kitchen fresh appeal

(1) USE WHAT YOU HAVE Reusing the old cabinets and keeping the original wall covers and dishwasher kept costs down on this remodel.

(COST)
LESS THAN
\$20,000

IT TAKES GUTS TO BUY a house with a broken kitchen, but if the price is right and the remodel is well budgeted, ugly dwellings can be worthy investments. "We loved everything else about this house at first sight," says Lisa Connor, "but my husband said, 'Forget it. There's no way I can live in a house with a junk kitchen.'" Encouraged by the reasonable layout and ample size of the Winnetka, Illinois, spot, Lisa convinced her husband, Clark, that they could revitalize the space for less than \$20,000. "For the 14 years we'd been married, I'd been seeing pictures of my 'dream' kitchen and they all looked the same, with white Shaker-style cabinets and soapstone countertops," Lisa says. Since the existing cabinets were sound and well configured, the couple was able to refinish them and add new doors rather than replace

(10) Direct your dollars where they count. Splurges on freestanding ranges—the high-powered cooktop—and steer clear of expensive brands that you may soon tire of.

them, a step that saved thousands of dollars. But God's one requirement—a pre-grade Wolf cooktop for \$2,600—proved to hurt the budget. "We knew we really wanted that, so instead of a midrange-grade refrigerator, we got a martini-cool-looking Asana for a lot less," says Lisa. Also, after careful consideration, the couple opted for new off-white (and easier to maintain) solid-refracting countertops instead of natural soapstone. In the end, the Connors got a kitchen they've raved about, with a price point they kept their balance sheet in the black.



(11) LIGHT TOUCH A beveled glass panel behind a glass-front island lends privacy without blocking light into the kitchen's entry nook.

(12) DECORATIVE VALUE The couple upgraded its cooktop heat-glass unit and mixed them with inexpensive ceramic soakers for a subtle eye-catching blue and white backdrop behind the undermount sink.



(13) BUILT-IN COOKTOP The pro-style Wolf cooktop has four burners and a grill. Near open shelving surrounding it kept awkward end-of-island walls at bay and showcased cabinetry details.

(14) TRUE OR FAKE? The gray tiled solid surfacing behind the Wolf Series defines the look of natural soapstone for about half the cost.

(15) SHOP SMART New-glass doors give the fish pond an elegant look. By buying the cabinet pulls—as well as the faucet's seat—the pair kept their spend on the island below a 10 percent amount for purchasing multiple items.

For more on building kitchen remodeling, visit dailymoney.com/1001003



(16) LOOK UP The finished look of the dining room picks up the theme of the new kitchen: clean-lined, Shaker-style. The backsplash and Wolf range are carved into the style by the homeowner's spouse.

(17) SMART STORAGE A built-in island-mounted sink is a handy spot for the new kitchen. The sink is a handy spot for the new kitchen. The sink is a handy spot for the new kitchen.



WHAT THEY GOT

off-white refacing, new doors, beveled glass island, and beveled glass island

Wolf range	\$2,600
Asana refrigerator	\$4,500
Wolf range hood	\$1,200
Wolf range hood	\$1,200
Wolf range hood	\$1,200
Wolf range hood	\$1,200
Wolf range hood	\$1,200
Wolf range hood	\$1,200
Wolf range hood	\$1,200
Wolf range hood	\$1,200
Wolf range hood	\$1,200

1001003 **WOLF RANGE HOOD** Customized and installed by Wolf Range Hood, 1001003

Fresh Paint, Better Performance

With a reconfigured layout and some creative recycling, a drabby 1980s kitchen gets modernized at a moderate cost.

{COST}

AROUND
\$40,000

WASTE-NOT-WANT-NOT is a philosophy that can pay off big time in a kitchen remodel. It certainly did at Steve and Caroline Thompson's 1980s Spanish-style house in Menlo Park, California. "When we bought the house, my first thought was 'Well, we'll just check the kitchen cabinets,'" says Steve. "They were in a real, a dated-looking style." Well, the boxes were sealed, the doors were solid wood, and the simple melamine door by rooming in and painting the existing ones, they could create the look all layout they wanted in a savings of \$30,000. They picked a few more pieces in unexpected places: They splurged a secondhand

{TIP} Look for ways to reintegrate old cabinets and appliances. It's easier on the budget and the environment. Check for gently used castoffs on eBay and Craigslist, or at Habitat for Humanity, and granddemonstrations.com.

Sub-Zero fridge with new glass doors and a stainless-steel panel made by a local fabricator for about \$100 (a quarter the cost of one from the manufacturer). And they built a stained-glass art to define single-pane windows with lead type instead of buy new divided-light ones. They removed the noisy stove in high-performance appliances, heated marble countertops, and solidified their new glass kitchen the architectural character it lacked. "I got a kick out of making things," says Steve. "Plus, it's the 'green' thing to do."



(1) REINOLD The couple relegated a new 48-inch Viking range and hood but saved a bundle by refurbishing a used Sub-Zero fridge-making kitchen like the Steve's farmhouse-style window hood, and General Electric appliances.

(2) PERFECT Free-standing furniture—like the art that sits above the cabinets—can have the effect of built-ins at a lower price. "They were \$5,000 each," says the husband. "I would have used the same ones in the old and with new cabinets."



(4) BRIGHTEN A wrought-iron, three-tiered bowl of candles on the counter above the island and the white plants set off the daylight.

(5) COLOR TROUS The couple staged it carefully, keeping the background colors neutral and injecting notes of color with accessories (not big-ticket appliances or materials) which can be swapped out at little expense when they're in the mood for a change.



(3) STORE MORE Island storage, like this repurposed wine cabinet, is key to a well-designed kitchen. The homeowners used their bar stools with built-in features like side racks to hold the pots and pans and a pop-up appliance shelf.

WHAT THEY GOT

stainless-steel job and new cabinets	\$20,000
new Sub-Zero range and hood	\$2,000
new Sub-Zero range and hood	\$2,000
new Sub-Zero range and hood	\$2,000
new Sub-Zero range and hood	\$2,000
new Sub-Zero range and hood	\$2,000
new Sub-Zero range and hood	\$2,000
new Sub-Zero range and hood	\$2,000
new Sub-Zero range and hood	\$2,000
new Sub-Zero range and hood	\$2,000
new Sub-Zero range and hood	\$2,000

How to Avoid the Hidden Costs of Kitchen Remodeling

Remodeling is rarely without unexpected (and expensive) complications. There's no way to avoid every pitfall, but a little early investigation can help you prevent them from busting your budget. For example, says Tim O'Brien, general contractor from Tulsa, it's fairly common for the water damage behind under-sink basin cabinets in a kitchen sink. So looking inside the cabinet and under the counter for leaks before you start your project can save you a lot of money. And, before you decide to install a new wall—anywhere—determine what's inside it, says Tim. "Go into the attic and basement to see if there are pipes or ductwork running into the wall, and ask the other side of it for registers or radiators." Heading away of live electrical wires and inadvertently damaging plumbing are costly (and potentially dangerous) mistakes.

There are, of course, some things you just can't anticipate before you get started, like unexpected damage from earlier renovations by previous professionals. (What were they thinking when they cut the joints to run that pipe?) To plan for unpleasant surprises, Tim suggests setting aside 10 percent of your total budget at the start so you won't find yourself 25 percent over budget at the end.

Made-to-measure cabinets, pro-style appliances, and plenty of personal touches make this handsome kitchen a comfortable place for hanging out 24/7.

IT MAY BE THE ULTIMATE ORDINAL number, but what makes a work so in order is the approach: That's the place for everything—and everyone—in the *New Canaan, Connecticut, Stoner Family*, high-functioning communal master family by Norwalk-based husband-and-wife team Matt Gardner, the editorial environment reflects the real-world rule of the house as well as the lifestyle of its owners. "It's not huge house, but it's functional," Gardner says. "We wanted the kitchen to have a comfortable, almost residential feel to it." It's an understated kitchen

[TIP] Can't swing custom cabinets? Create a one-of-a-kind effect with stock sizes by varying the height and depth of the cabinet boxes. And give an island a contrasting finish.

allowing work (Haw & Fawcett) to make cabins that have the look of a miniature with turned legs, decorative panel doors, and wide open doors. It's similar to the owner's specifications. While the 15-ft cabin is fairly compact and easy to reposition, its 30-ft-long hull gives the impression of grandeur. Guadalupe took advantage of the wall space by stacking chairs right up to the wide window sill, adding a stretch of narrow wainscot floor up, glass doors across the top. Applauding the owners' preference for ease among art forms, providing their web + 60-inch WebRugs, over 30-inch infers, cranes (Kneeland) 36-inch chairs, panels, from Farrow drawers, and a wicker couch, all from Farrow, as well as a microwave, a wicker chaise, and a built-in coffee station. The style is a kitchen with a ranch look and long beams, but quality materials to match.



[4] HULLSLEY The marble-topped island with bar seating puts family and friends in proximity to the cash when you're just steps away from steak, shrimp, and classic cocktails.

[17] ISLE TWO A second moose topped Island bracketed with columns and filled with nest gloves and salibuts separates the Mothet from the family room providing a handier barrier than a wall enclosing the cook to monitor the surface in both rooms.



[1] ONE-STEP ITEM The multi-*in* filter defines and expresses maker loops, defines close and embeddings close. The cell also shows a water line with the bridge on the closed at left) a part filter output.

(4) ON THE BACK: A Mide warming blanket keeps Frodo at the right temperature till you're ready to serve them—a big help when hosting a dinner party.

[1] DROPPING LIGHT The lighting plan includes 27 low-voltage points to illuminate cabinet interiors and undercabinets, plus recessed ceiling fixtures and decorative pendants.

(X) FULL-OUT ORGANIZERS: Add luxury to any kitchen's storage compartments that make essentials easy to access and pull in and to cluttered outdoor bar areas where things can get buried faster!



[1] LOCKED/GOOD COINIS GREAT
The 40-inch Welltrange tubedock withway-to-clean-its-and-topped-with-a-plastic-funnel-over-the-hole-the-mechanism-of-the-coupler-is



(4) **IN CLAM VIEW** A glass-fronted spice cabinet puts a counter-top of jars on display and keeps the rest neatly concealed and close at hand.



WHAT THEY GOT

cutting-edge culture	
rough-hewn crew and chief	\$64,400
muscle and simple counter tops	\$43,400
staid bookshelves	\$6,000
sofa, chairs, and just like	\$10,000
light fixtures	\$4,400
rough refrigerators, liquor drawers, and other accessories	
total 12,000 items	\$12,000
notes	\$12,000





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The outdoor shower is a
great way to keep your
body clean and cool.
It's a great idea for
anyone who loves the
outdoors. It's a great
idea for anyone who
loves the outdoors.
It's a great idea for
anyone who loves the
outdoors.

summer SHOWERS

○ A place to rinse off outdoors is a no-brainer for beach dwellers. But it's also great for cleaning up grubby gardeners, sweaty Little Leaguers, and muddy mutts.

Here's how to hook up one of your own BY NANCY REILES | PHOTOGRAPH BY J.E. JAN NASS

You don't have to be shivering in a sandy swimsuit

to appreciate an open-air shower. Even landlocked homeowners around our homes, gritty green thumb, suburban soccer fields are discussing that bathing outdoors is not just practical, it's downright luxurious. That's how architect Howard Backus saw his shower (pictured below). Every morning, he'd wake there, looking up at the clouds or down at his garden and the sight of mountains beyond his home in California's

Napa Valley. "It's surprising when it's cold, it's amazing when it's sunny, and it's incredibly refreshing when it's sunny and hot," he says. Whether the goal is to work off the day or to connect with nature, there is an outdoor shower for you. The simplest is a foot sprayer hooked up to existing cold-water pipes. The most complicated and expensive is an outdoor shower with cold and hot water, a custom enclosure for privacy, and a built-in changing room for convenience. What's universal about any outdoor shower is that it belongs on your estate. And yes, for some, it's also about the endless potential for using the backdrop in the hills. Here's what you need to know to create the outdoor shower that best suits your talent—or not-so-mild—ambition.

—SITE SELECTION
Determining the best location for an outdoor shower depends on how you'll use it. Take and Allison Holtschlag just the foot shower at their Sag Harbor, New York, home (pictured page 117) near the front door so when the couple and their two daughters return from the beach they can spray off the sand before going inside. Others opt for a shower by the pool for a post-swim rinse, or close to the back door for the roadie athlete just back from a sweaty jog.

The best outdoor showers also take advantage of the natural beauty of the surroundings. For a family in Ridgehaven, N.Y., architect Nick Maren designed a shower with a hanging enclosure (pictured page 112) that he sited toward the back of the house to offer views of a rose garden and a farm across the street.

Plumbing can also dictate site. A shower on a deck near the kitchen or the laundry room means you can tap into existing hot- and cold-water lines. One placed on a remote corner of the house, though, requires digging a trench and running pipe to the destination.

—PRIVACY
When designing your outdoor shower, consider how much you are willing to expose, and account for the feelings of privacy or seclusion. "I encourage people to build with the most modest privacy in mind," says Edna Harris, a partner of The Outdoor Shower. The most straightforward approach is a freestanding folding screen, which works especially well on a patio or deck where permanent walls can run up into each space. For an outdoor shower on a rooftop or a close-to-house in Washington, D.C., architect Kim Tong designed a roll-up bamboo screen that's high enough for a shield but low enough not to block dramatic views of the capital. The most elegant approach draws on the landscape, whether a rose-pruned hedge or an existing curtain of trees. Keep in mind that if trees are deciduous, you may have to wait until late spring for sufficient cover.

A custom wood shower enclosure offers privacy plus flexibility to add built-in wall shelves, benches, or even a built-in changing room. To preserve mobility and make the space well-ventilated so it completely dries out after every use, walls should be secured to corner posts and elevated about a foot off the ground to promote air circulation. And if you decide to add a solid wall, attach it only to the posts, leaving open space above the walls. Another location for the portable spot that designer Ross Greenway selected for a client's shower in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina (pictured page 117), will also help dry the enclosure.

PHOTO: JAMES HARRIS

AUTIC ENCLASURE

Delicate wooden slats form the walls on three sides of this open-air shower in which a July 2008, S.C. local paper says the owner had his in a back-of-the-house area of the kitchen below.

PLUMBING

Hook up an outdoor shower much like you would an indoor one. If you want both cold and hot running water, New Old House plumbing and landscaping Richard Trifunovic recommends adding a pressure-balancing valve to prevent scalding. "And for those who live in four-season climates, by far the biggest concern is having the shiver in down pipes when the temperature drops," cautions Richard, who's trapped inside can freeze and crack the pipes. Shower valves should be located in the house with pipes traveling on a downward slope. An exposed roof and a showerhead that both unswivel, like the greenhouse model Steve Crowell used in a shower (pictured page 116) he built in Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains region, means that every drop is directed.

Drainage is also an issue when the shower is in use. Local building codes vary about the disposal of gray water. But for the most part, outdoor showers simply drain into the ground. A drainwell consisting of a perforated pipe with landscape fabric and filled with gravel can be placed under and to the side of the shower floor to help disperse the flow. More complicated, but required in some localities, is routing waste water into the sewer system.



See how it's done—watch a video of an outdoor shower being installed at PhotoIllustrations.com/showbuds.



SPALKE AMBITIOUS

Just off the master bedroom at home in California is Napa Valley, the Holtschlags have multiple bathrooms. Did the master bedroom in a shower with a 12-inch rain-water head for soaking. The ground-level shower would be a shower for soaking. The open air shower is just for the morning.

UNEXPECTED WEARS

Draped from both ends, outdoor solar lights are used to the purpose of this shower to extend its life. The solar panel does not get wet, so it can be used all day long to power the lights at the shower, and stay on about 1 hour after dark as the homeowners decide on more of the surrounding Blue Ridge Mountains.

MATERIALS

For shower boxes, walls, and floors, choose weather-resistant materials. Enclosures made of pressure-treated wood, cedar, oak, Brazilian rosewood, even salvaged window shutters will hold up well outside. When buying salvaged wood, look for FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification, which means the forests were sustainably harvested. Wood is not ideal for floors, but for most decking materials, it should be treated periodically to prevent mildew and fading. A stone floor requires less maintenance, but be sure to get a type that's non-slippery underfoot, such as slate or granite or travertine over rock.

Basic Clayco recommends brass or copper fixtures because they develop a natural patina as they age. Brass also works well, but avoid anything too shiny, because the glaze will fade. In outdoor showers, where salty air can get most metals, corrosion-resistant stainless steel with a 304 rating is typically the best choice. To keep maintenance low, new, white, or downy-curling of metals with warm, coppery tones, rust, and then wipe it dry with a soft cloth.

EXTRAS

The amenities you add to your shower will play a big role in how it feels and how longwey you use it. They also add to the price, which ranges from about \$200 for a basic hose-connected shower to as much as \$20,000 for



a lush bathhouse with a changing area and built-in seating. Among the simplest add-ons are hooks for hanging robes and wet bathing suits, and shelves for shampoo, and extra towels. A glass door that will hold water as you use it is a nice touch. Other options play off the natural setting. Homeowner John Brown and wife Andrea

(pictured page 142) parade his 1920s log cabin on Holly Beach, S.C. And then there are indulgences, such as an oversized steam-style showerhead to amplify the feeling of being out in the elements, and/or speakers (some are disguised in rock) to play on music, and low-voltage lighting to illuminate a relaxing shower. But of course, the best amenity of all is nature itself. ■

AIRWELLS

Practical and stylish, privacy while also allowing breezes to pass through this portable shower in Mount Pleasant, S.C. Facing the beach on a horizontal plane, rather than the traditional vertical one, gives the enclosure a sleek and linear look. Inside the metal-and-plastic panels is a drain that connects to sewer lines.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JAMES CHASE PHOTO



FOOT BATH

The best for the best always include the best features. S.C., there is a line to the ground as the homeowners' two young daughters can reach it. A sliding rope tied to the door and draped through a pulley placed high on the wall lets adults easily turn on the water, too.

Shower-in-a-Box

All in-one systems make it simpler than ever to get wet in the wild.

○ **SPA TREATMENT** The built-in shower panel (see inset) from Ruhl can be used indoors or out. It has a glass face and stainless-steel shelves behind the shampoo

and soap. At 61 inches tall, it's a head-to-toe shower, and three built-in jets spray water every 10 minutes (for \$54,950, ruhlshower.com).

○ **SAMPLE SPRAY** The portable outdoor shower from Gracie has an oversized stainless-steel head that rises from a tower made of recycled weather-resistant wood. The unit, which hooks up to a garden hose, also has a built-in soap dish and towel rack (for \$279, andco.com).

○ **SUN FUELED** The Incorporated Solar Shower

tower relies on the sun to warm cold water from your garden hose. A built-in combination energy-collector panel and storage tank can heat 5 to 10 gallons of water in less than two hours (for \$379, goodproducts.com).

○ **MODIST MODERN** The WGA wall-mount shower from Calzeas adds a stylish look to your outdoor bathing area. It has a sleek one-piece stainless-steel body and built-in handles. The shower can be placed or hooked up to a garden hose with an adapter (for \$495, calzeas.com/en-us/usa/usa.html).

○ **DO IT ALL** The Water Wall from Ritzshower has a sink for washing hands, tools, and vegetables; a hand-crank reel for reeling the garden hose; and a shower. Made of stainless steel with brass fittings (for \$2,280, ritzshower.us).

[Inset photo] Photo courtesy of Ruhl Outdoor Shower Inc.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JAMES CHASE PHOTO



LIKE OLD TIMES

(ONLY BETTER)

BY JILL CONNORS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MEGAN CHAFFIN
PRODUCED BY COLETTE SCARLON DETZ

[illegible]



REFINED FINISH

The intricate design and polished copper finish of these Victorian-style light fixtures is a testament to the craftsmanship of the era. Each fixture is made of solid brass and features a glass shade. \$120 per fixture. www.vintage.com

LIGHT FLOUNDER

This elegant, hand-crafted light fixture is made of solid brass and features a glass shade. It is a perfect addition to any Victorian-style home. \$120 per fixture. www.vintage.com



PAPER IN

This elegant, hand-crafted light fixture is made of solid brass and features a glass shade. It is a perfect addition to any Victorian-style home. \$120 per fixture. www.vintage.com



LAY OF LACQUER

The hand-painted lacquer finish on this sink is a testament to the craftsmanship of the era. It is a perfect addition to any Victorian-style home. \$120 per fixture. www.vintage.com

LET IT POUR

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ITEMIZING THE VINTAGE LOOK.

When it comes to creating period style, it's all in the products you choose

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEATE

100
To the ceiling
scaffolding is
great. As long as
you have the safety
way to scale the
heights.



shoulda, woulda,

Regrets? Anyone who's ever remodeled a kitchen—including
This Old House staffers—can fess up to a few.
Let our hard-earned hindsight help you steer clear
of similar screwups

coulda...

Let's face it: Even the best-planned kitchen remodels hit rough patches. Unreliable contractors, late deliveries, and mismeasured materials just seem to go hand-in-hand with shocking estimates and shiny new faucets. But at the end of the road, it's often the little things—the greasy fingerprints on the stainless-steel fridge, the dings in the bamboo flooring, or the veneer peeling off of the cabinets—that drive us to distraction. We asked homeowners who'd recently endured the rigors of kitchen remodeling to vent: What would you do differently if you could remodel your kitchen all over again? Here's what they said—and how their battle scars can prevent you from making the same mistakes.

about fixtures or fittings to the contractor, you'll leave one to blame but yourself if you are dissatisfied with the results. "The typical piece to install a dishwasher is next to the sink, so it can be hooked up to the plumbing system. It also makes the job easier than convenient," says John Succesio, an interior designer in New York City. "Unfortunately in this case, the dishwasher intake valve connected by piping to the sink instead of the main front panel disengaged into the island."

the regret: OUR SOAPSTONE SINK AROUND THE EDGES

Soft soapstone counters and hard cast-iron sinks aren't a mix. We learned the hard way by pouring the stone around the undersized sink when hand-washing our French waffle coats. —JONAS WASSERMAN, WASHINGTON, NEW YORK

better best: Ticker to Your Gidding. Style is every other deck or in your kitchen under your choice of caulk.

the regret: WE LET THE CONTRACTOR DECIDE

My husband and I went away on a call during the first two weeks of our kitchen remodel and came home to an unpleasant surprise. Our contractor had installed the dishwasher in the side of the island, taking the adjoining dining room—a pretty sight. I've seen the same steps when

it's time to clean up the dishes. We say it again. —ADRIAN VARGAS, CALIFORNIA, NEW YORK

better best: You White the Clocks. You Call the Sides. Newer is on vacation at the beginning of end of remodeling project, when decisions are coming out and out. And while it may be tempting to defer decisions

by barbara
winfield

illustrations by
mark rothko

A close-up photograph showing a person's hand using a red, rectangular pigment block to apply color to a light-colored concrete surface. The concrete is being worked on with a trowel, and there's a blue container of water or liquid nearby.

CONCRETE'S CHANGING COLORS

A behind-the-scenes building material turns into a kitchen star as homeowners design it, shape it, and color it to match their imaginations. Here's a look at how a concrete counter is made

by KEITH RANDOLPH
Photographs by KRISTINE LAURSEN

Recessed to work with the pigments, the concrete is multiple coats of staining and tints to create the concrete. The concrete is stained with a pigment and a pigment is added to the mix by hand color choices are practically limitless.





hear the words "concrete countertops" and the image that likely comes to mind is of a cool, sleek Subo Is it inhabited by a tubular rat or an avant-garde architect. Well, show five pictures right out of your head. "A lot of people associate concrete countertops with a dark, industrial look," says Christine Liscala, owner of Concrete Culture Concrete in Lancaster, New York. "But half of my clients these days are putting them in older homes. Have you ever seen a desert green concrete countertop in an old farmhouse kitchen? If not, I can tell you it's beautiful."

To say sanding a few dozen late-colored counter tops in Gloucester, Mass., is as purely white as one in a beachfront Cape Cod. Since just about any pigment can be added to the mix, the possibilities are endless.

Armed with the West Coast's most experienced with decorative concrete in the 1980s, at the very least, it has moved into a mainstream alternative to high-end beauty queens like granite and marble. Perhaps the biggest draw is the material's adaptability. In addition to lustrous color choices, it can be poured into just about any shape, molded to any texture, and gives any edge profile, so it looks at home in a wide variety of spaces. And because each countertop is handmade, it has an artisanal quality that other manufactured materials lack.

Growing popularity has assured that you can find pros who make and install concrete countertops nearly anywhere. Expect to pay \$75 to \$150 per square foot, about as per with granite.

To see a kitchen transformed, we tagged along with Liscala on a project for a New Jersey homeowner. Once you've seen the results, you might start thinking about this craggy old material in a whole new way.



1) The first step is to build a wooden form, called your template made at the client's house. Later wet concrete will be poured into the form, which includes a pulley for a sink. While some pro-concrete countertop artists, most prefer to do it in the workshop, where they can control the process more closely. 2) Pigments are weighed before being added to the concrete mixture, which also includes Portland cement, fly ash—a by-product of coal plants used as a binder—water, and coarse aggregate, which is added for strength. Aggregate can be used for decorative purposes, too. If you want a terrazzo look, for example, the counter surface can be ground down to expose aggregates in an old-fashioned volcanic motion color pattern, up glass depending on the desired effect. 3) Send the being mixed without also allowing the concrete to the mixer until it has the consistency of soft butter. 4) The ingredients are combined in a mixer and finished for about 15 minutes until the concrete slurry reaches the consistency of soft butter. 5) The mix starts filling the form with concrete. The work is done on a vibration table, a platform that bounces the mixers up and down. Working the mixture for about five minutes gets rid of air bubbles that form during the mixing and spreading, and it's the key to one along with a thick mixture could trap. Workers have about half an hour to spread the mixture of the form, so it's important to have the form before it begins to set. 6) The counter top gets its backbone from rebar with reinforcement sunk just below the surface. Metal reinforcement rods to help hold the mixture and smooth the surface in process that is done later on for up to two hours.





Adding ingredients will compromise the outstanding strength. And, other brands, Lincoln feels that Easterns are particular to steady grays and strong whites, while West Coasters opt for funker reds, blues and vibrant oranges. The appearance of the final color also depends on the base. The counter-top mixture exposed here, Plaston, such as melamine, yields a softer, reddish finish, while Plexiglas and other acrylics create a smoother, glossier look.

You can go with a matte finish, or grind down the surface to expose bits of stone or glass aggregate for a terrazzo effect.



Planning a kitchen remodel? Check out our countertop galleries at timothysaw.com/countertops

After 20 days of curing, the countertops in the master bathroom and the six slightly rounded-edge granite are wood-blocked with a palm-leaf design. The executive wife, during the two weeks with limited use of her private jet, laser-cut steel are added on. Mike couldn't have completely done everything before. "Granite islands are more difficult to install than the rest of the stone," says Mike, but they locate against the island's frame. On Installation Day, Lincoln built the countertops into his truck for the two-hour drive to the house. Like granite, steel is easy to transport on its side without cracking, even daily against the truck interior. And since it's only about 18 pounds per square foot (about the same as granite), the steel cabinets have to be made of at least 1/4-inch plating to support it. After the steel is dry-fitted, it's secured with construction adhesive and leveled with shims. Shims are fitted with a string, referred to as the countertop's zero-gravity reference. Following installation, the surface gets polished with techniques on bonding after use for added protection. Because granite is porous, Lincoln recommends resurfacing every two or three months. The color copier is swayed in the shop, independent of the island's future kitchen island. The finished stone is green counter tops with matching beige backsplash. One of the three children added a white for eating and drinking. ■



WORKSHOP

TECHNIQUES, TIPS, AND YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

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141 Skill Building

Fix Wobbly Ceiling Fan Blades
Measure a Window Opening
Build a Benchtop Tool Rack

145 Norm's Notebook

Tips for Using Levels

147 Resource Directory

A lawn sprayer's one purpose is to turn those water-hate spots out into thriving green. A new one designed by Paul L. Renda in 2005. The small, wind-resistant, four-wheel sprayer was made by Sunbeam until about 1982. It was then changed by changing the wheels and the sprayer out to its current form.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MATE

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WORKSHOP

Ask This Old House

NEED AN EXPERT? WE'VE GOT ONE. NEED TO ANSWER YOUR HOME QUESTIONS?



LEFT: BOB LANGRISH
 contractor Brian Cook keeps crabgrass down by applying a pre-emergent weed control in the spring and waiting until fall to plant grass seed.

apply a pre-emergent weed control that will stop any crabgrass seeds from growing up.

Who Does Small Repairs?

One of my tails has been looking for some time, and now the subfloor is damaged and some of the surrounding tile flooring is cracking. I can't find a plumber who's willing to do the floor repair, nor can I find a carpenter who wants to remove the toilet and figure out why it's leaking. Neither one of them wants to tackle the tile. I'm lost—what else can I do? Can't do the work myself. What do you suggest?

FLORISS WYNN, COLUMBIA, MD.

Richard Tedlow replies: There's a common dilemma with small projects. A specialized contractor such as a plumber or carpenter usually doesn't want to mess with things outside his area of expertise and may even be prevented from doing so by local regulations. The ideal person for your situation is a handyman who has a range of basic skills.

A number of national handyman franchises operate in your area, so you can do this kind of work. If your friends and neighbors

Lawn Touch-up

I brought in some soil this spring to level a few low spots in the lawn and planted grass seed. Now I'm plagued with crabgrass. What can I do about it?

THE BELICA, IL, JAMES P.

Bob Cook replies: Life would be so easy if only we could settle for crabgrass covered lawns. Here's the problem: When you plant grass in the spring, any crabgrass seed that's around—and there's plenty of it—will grow, and will overtake your delicate grass seedlings, particularly in a sunny location.

That's why I prefer to plant grass in the fall, where crabgrass won't fight you. Grass seedlings love the cool, wet conditions, and by the end of the growing season you'll have a reasonable stand of grass. Then, in the spring,

Q: WHAT IS IT?

- A. Slog trap
- B. Helix connector
- C. Creak-snoozer tool
- D. Do...



© 2010 HENRY J. HENRY





Discolored wood over time's pressure-treated against rot and termites will decay under assault from the sun and the weather.

ments." Be sure to check references and, depending on the area, whether the worker is licensed and bonded.

Refreshing Deck Boards

Our deck runs built with pressure-treated wood in 1991. Now the boards look like they need help. Can they be salvaged or is finished, or will we have to replace them?

JENNIFER PROSSERIN

Tom Silva replies: If the whole deck looks like the section in your photo, the boards are beyond repair and ought to be replaced. Most of them appear to have large discolorations—that allow water to soak in to the wood and rot it. Some boards have green that has raised enough to form fuzzy splinters. It's probably the best thing for you to do.

Sanding isn't an option because the preservative treatment would become toxic chemicals into the air as well as into the soil, no to say what precautions you took to avoid it. And if you were thinking of flipping the

boards and nailing them with the outside facing up, don't bother—you won't get much more life out of that wood. So remove the boards, repair the substructure as needed, and then put on new decking. To a modifying to do it all this again anytime soon, follow the recommended care of whatever new regimen for your new deck material.

Old-School MDF

Why does MDF at our local home center come in sheets that are 48 by 96 inches, rather than the 4 by 8-foot standard plywood?

LOU HENAGA, COLUMBIA, MD

Kevin O'Connor replies: Gary Hazzard, vice president of Product Acceptance at the Composite Panel Association, tells me that MDF—medium-density fiberboard—is manufactured as many different sizes and thicknesses in not various industries and is widely used in construction. And a lot of MDF comes from Canada, so you might even encounter sheets used to replace dimensions. He also points out that a slightly

curved piece reinforces the fact that MDF, unlike plywood, isn't suited for structural use as roof, wall, or floor sheathing.

When I asked Norm Abrams how best to handle it, he said he uses it as a couple of advantages to having an oversized panel. One is that you can cut it down and still get pieces in multiples of 24 inches. Another is that a panel can be trimmed to remove raised edges from the edges without making a smaller than 4 by 8 foot.

Cleaning Cedar Shingles

I painted my house about 30 years ago with red cedar shingles, and now I power wash them every year or so. Is there some kind of paint or clear sealer I can put on them to save me from this wet chore?

JOHN HOLLOMELL, LEMON GROVE, CALIF.

Norm Abrams replies: Power washing is a pretty aggressive way to clean things, particularly a wood as soft as cedar. Every time you spray the shingles, you're removing wood fibers, which means you'll end up having to replace

them much sooner than if you let them be. Also, there's a big risk that water will get under the siding and soak the structure.

At this point, consider using a maintenance-type stain of pre-rinsing oil on the shingles to give them a sealer in color, but don't let them look like a seal, unless you're sure. I wouldn't paint the shingles to put a hard, clear finish on them because that will be another sort of maintenance or breakdown down the line.

There's one other option: Just let them weather. Eventually they'll turn a fairly even, dark chocolate brown.

To send questions to Ask This Old House, go to askthisoldhouse.com or write to:

Ask This Old House
c/o The Home Magazine
644 Orange Ave.
New York, NY 10025

Include a daytime address and daytime phone number. Please print clearly and legibly and may be used in appropriate form. All questions are subject to editorial review. We reserve the right to edit or omit any question for space or editorial reasons.

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Cynthia W., actual LL customer

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"I liked the quality of BellaWood so much I installed it in my own home."
- Bob Wia

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WORKSHOP

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Skill Building

Balancing a Ceiling Fan

How to tame up wobbly blades

NEED TO FIND A SPINMASTER?

A ceiling fan with wobbling blades is just a small distraction. These blades can also wear down the motor's bearings and bushings and cause its noisy squeaks and whines. If tightening the screws on the blade brackets and wiggling all the blades don't solve the problem, follow these guidelines to get the fan back on even keel.

Mark the blades. Place a numbered piece of masking tape on each blade so you don't lose track of which blade is which.

Level the edges. Use a ruler or yardstick to measure the distance between each blade's leading edge and the ceiling (A). Keep the ruler vertical and always measure from the same spot on the ceiling, moving the blades to measure each one. If a blade is out of level, it's usually bent or twisted, so bend it gently downward by hand. Have another fan to use if the problem persists. For the best view, stand on a ladder away from the fan, at eye level with the blades. Use an object as low as the outboard duct as a reference or weld an arrow on a post to line if the blades are all wobbling at the same level.

Try a balancing kit. If the fan continues to wobble, try a blade-balancing kit from your local home center or try for a manufacturer. Install the clip provided and place it in the middle of the trailing edge of the blade you wish to rebalance. Accurately observe the running fan from below to see just how the extra weight affects it (see tip, right). Switch the fan's on/off switch to the "on" position and the fan will start to wobble less.



Then turn the fan on and see if there's a change. Continue moving and testing the clip's position on the blade or others if necessary until the wobbling stops.

Add weights. Using a piece of tape, temporarily secure one of the kit's self-adhesive weights to the tip of the blade's castings. To free with the clip, remove the clip and install the fan. If it works on its own, mark the blade around the weight, remove the tape and stick the weight permanently to the blade (B). Do this on every blade if necessary until the fan runs smoothly. —JANALISA ROHRER

SEE TIP

To identify which blade is behaving badly when the fan is spinning, dab each tip with a different colored fluorescent paint. For easy removal, put the dab on a piece of masking tape.

PHOTOS: GARY HARRISON/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES

How to Measure a Window Opening

Make sure your exterior shutters and storm windows fit the way they should.



FINISHED MEASUREMENT
UNFIRED SHUTTERS/STORMS

To get correctly sized exterior shutters or storm windows, you have to provide the manufacturer or dealer with a precise set of window measurements. The way to do that is to take each opening's members at several points—all windows are neither square. Use a finishing rule with a slide extension. It's much more accurate for finding interior dimensions than a tape measure. Here's what to do:

1. **Measure the rule to the approximate width of the opening, and set the folded end against the inside edge of the casing, as shown.** Slide out the rule

even to touch the opposite casing's inside edge. Add the width and measure to the number of the other end of the rule.

2. **Measure the opening horizontally at the top inside and bottom inside locally at the sides and in the side.** Use the smallest of the three measurements to ensure that the storm window or shutter won't be too big to fit in the opening.

When you place an inside, rough-size that you are providing as final measurements, the manufacturer will then know to take into account any clearance that might be needed by it around into your opening. That way there won't be any size or installation day. —WILLIAM DICK

FOR YOU

To check whether an opening is square, measure diagonally from each top corner to the opposite corner on the bottom. If the two measures are different, then the opening is raked, a fact that the window or shutter maker should be made aware of.

Bench-Top Tool Rack

How to build a custom organizer for frequently used tools

FINISHED TOOL RACK
UNFIRED SHUTTERS/STORMS

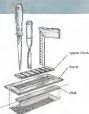
A simple slot check, set in an opening of a kitchen counter top or workbench, provides a safe space for frequently used tools, such as screwdrivers, wrenches, sockets, or squares in a pinch. It keeps them getting rusted or damaged. The rack, made with a wide strip of 1/2-inch thick hardwood, is designed to be removed for easy clearing and finishing.

1. **Measure the blades and handles.** Take the widest blade inside 1/2 inch for clearance. This will be the frame's inside width. Measure the thickness of the thickest handle and add an inch so there's enough room for your hand to touch and grab it. Multiply that number by all the tools you intend to store and add the frame's inside length. (Example for sockets with 1/2-inch handles and sockets: $1 \frac{1}{2} \times 1 \frac{1}{2} = 2 \frac{1}{4}$ inch wide length.) Finally, make sure the original blade won't fit anything lower or bump into anything above with being removed.

2. **Make the frame.** Lay the measurements above, enter and glue together the frame. When the glue sets, glue the blade to the underside of the frame's long pieces, as shown. Position their inside edges so they project about 1/2 inch into the frame's opening and extend about 1/2 inch into any outside edge.

3. **Cut the spacer blocks.** To find the spacer block width, measure the thickness of the thickest blade and add 1/2 inch. Multiply that sum by the number of tools the frame will store, and subtract the number from the interior length of the frame. Then divide by the number of slots, minus one. (Example for 1/2-inch-thick blades: $1 \frac{1}{2} \times 1 \frac{1}{2} = 2 \frac{1}{4}$ inch wide spacer block.) Rip out the frame stock to that width, then cut the spacers to the length of the frame's interior width. Glue them in the slots, using the spacers or sockets to maintain consistent spacing.

4. **Cut the opening.** Power the blade when you cut it to be on the outside of the blade and run a joint



along the outside edges of the blades. (If you can't reach the end of the blade, use a jointer or sand the outside corners.) Remove the frame and remove any remaining glue. Inside each side of the corner you've positioned, cut four holes slightly larger than the spacers to allow them to slide in. Then, start the spacers and cut along the line you've marked the holes. 5. **Set the frame.** Insert the frame into the hole through it with your foot of force. —BOB VANDERKAM

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Norm's Notebook

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LEVELS

Test for Accuracy

The field test for level accuracy is to square that I perform it almost every time I use the tool.

Step 1. Place a level on a flat surface and read the bubble position in relation to the lines on the vial.

Step 2. Keep the level horizontal, pivot it 180 degrees, and place it back on the same spot. If the bubble returns to the same position in the vial, then it's accurate. Repeat the test for each vial in the level. (For the sake of that vacuum pump, use the one I'm looking at in the picture.)

By the way, while its exceedingly rare, I'll never not use it, but the reason is simple: you can break it.

Read on to see just how to know it.

1



2



Turning a Corner

A handy tip for drawing level lines, but if that line has to turn outside a corner, a combination square is the most, most versatile way to mark the turn. First, draw a level line on one wall right to the corner. Then place the square's rule on the adjacent wall, as shown (1). Align the rule's line you just drew, and make a mark on the adjacent wall. Now bring the level with this mark and corner down to your level line (2).



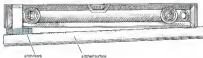
To check whether your level is flat, put the level on two adjacent floors. Mark the bubble straight on each floor. Then, flip the level over. The same bubble line on the two surfaces, such as a counter-top, shows the level is flat. If it's not, it's a warning that the level is not flat. Then, flip it 180 degrees and check again. Back to front. If there's no discrepancy, the surface is level.

NORM'S TIP

Whether I'm checking a vertical place for plumb or a horizontal place for level, I always use the longest level that I can because it gives me the most accurate results.

Perfect Pitch

It's a string rule that requires a standard pitch. Both attaching a gutter (1) and a block of wood to one end of the level to give it the desired pitch (below). For example, if I need a slope of 1 inch for every foot, I'll tape a 1/4 inch block to the end of a 1-foot level (1 x 1/4 = 1/4). That way, when the bubble indicates level, the gutter has the proper slope.



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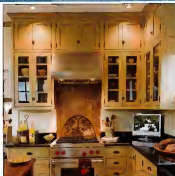
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HEADING DOWN the Mississippi River on a pleasureboat in the 1880s, Mark Twain commented that Lake Providence, Louisiana, was "the first distinctly Southern-looking town you came to" with its surfeit of "shade trees hung with venerable gray beards of Spanish moss." The ship's second officer told Twain there was a certain "restful pervue," Sunday except, about this quiet little enclave near the Arkansas border.

Sound next? Then maybe you should visit up-the-Colorado Creek cottage—one of the town's oldest, most architecturally notable houses with 1.5 acres of lakefront. It was built in the 1870s by Dr. Frederick Robert Bernard, a prominent city health official who lived there with his wife, Estelle and their three children.

The third bedroom was constructed in a manner befitting its new dimensions, with thick walls, broad eaves, front and back porches, two fire-sealing windows, and a central hall that channels the sea breeze. When it's cold, and it does get cold there, you can sit up the house a few bright cold fireplaces—once you remove the brick and make use of all their decades' eggs. You'll also need to build new plantings, patch the plaster and siding, and replace some rotten back porch floor boards.

After years of economic distress, Lakeview scores (page 4544) transforming itself into a tourist attraction, or those just looking for a little Southern-style scenery and tranquility while housing is going up the town's a remarkable tale and the town's impact is a boost to the area's economy. The town's a boost to the area's economy. The town's a boost to the area's economy.



TOP Typical of Southern architecture, the house has floor-to-ceiling windows, stone walls, and a wide front porch. **ABOVE** A view of Lake Providence from the front window. **RIGHT** The back porch and the four corner quarters. **BOUNCE** This century-old tub drains through the floorboards to the ground. **BELLOW** The wooden hull is a tapered cylinder, with



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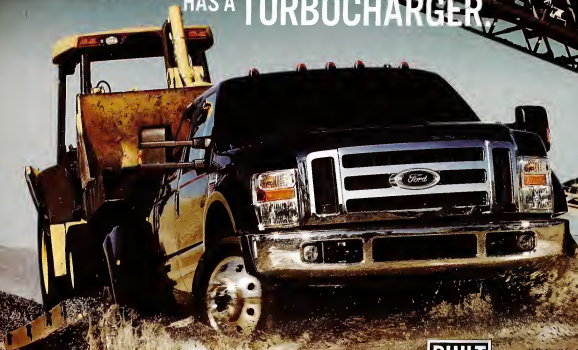
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